MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

26 MAY

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KA-ZAR™

THE SAVAGE

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FRENZ & GILE FINGEROTH

THE STORY BEHIND THE COVER

(that's a pun, son)

So Ron Frenz calls me up one day and says, "Danny, how 'bout if we use a photo background of the New York skyline on the cover of KA-ZAR #26? Then, over it, we can put symbolic shots of Ka-Zar, Shanna and Zabu as they hightail it back to the Savage Land!"

"Sounds great, Ron," said I. I hung up and began to contemplate the accolades that would come rolling in once the cover (not to mention the insides) hit the stands.

Then came the horrible realization. I had forgotten *one* thing: to make the cover come out right, I was gonna have to do — ugh — *extra work*.

I mean, it was easy for *Ron* to say let's do a New York photo background. *He* lives in Pittsburgh. I contemplated calling him back and telling him to draw the blamed background and make it easy on all of us. But I liked the idea too much.

So after much procrastination, I borrowed a camera from some friends, dug out a couple of quarters for the Staten Island Ferry, and went off, snapping away at the Manhattan coastline as the ferry made its crossings. I spent a couple of hours out on the water, getting some good sea air into my New Yorker's lungs and waving at the gulls. Hey, this was actually sort of fun!

But it was also the *easiest* part... and I knew it!

Once back on land, I headed the film over to the good folks at Rogers Color Labs who made blow ups of some of the better looking shots, out of which were picked the two best. Next, I sent those to Ron, who made a few sketches to go with 'em. I then narrowed it down to one sketch and one photo, had him do a fully penciled version, and then sent it off to Armando, who did his usual superb inking job. But it *wasn't* over yet.

Once Armando had worked his magic over Ron's pencils, Ron Zalme — the Bullpen's cover production ace — put all the elements together, adding logo, price, etc. The cover was beginning to look like it actually might work. Then it went over to George Roussos. George, our veteran cover colorist (or is it color coverist?) colored the figures against a blow-up of the chosen photo and the thing was coming tantalizingly close to happening! After I had driven everyone nuts with my usual requests for numerous little changes, it was actually ready to go to the engravers.

As I write this, the drawn figures are in the hands of one color separation company, the photo-negative in the hands of another, and we're not going to really know how it all comes out — and together — until *you* do. Such are the hazards of experimentation. If it turns out well, we all graciously accept your compliments. If it stinks, we offer our apologies and promise to do better next time.

As it turns out, Ron Frenz is going off to do STAR WARS and MARVEL TEAM-UP and so this is his last issue of KA-ZAR, making me all the gladder I went with his idea. Luckily I was able to persuade Armando to step into the breech (actually, if I'd dared to ask anybody else, he would have set fire to my flat files) and he'll be taking over both penciling and inking beginning next issue. Armando looks like one of the most unique, exciting — and excit*ed* — talents to hit the field in a good long while. We've already got his pencils for #27, and they're red hot.

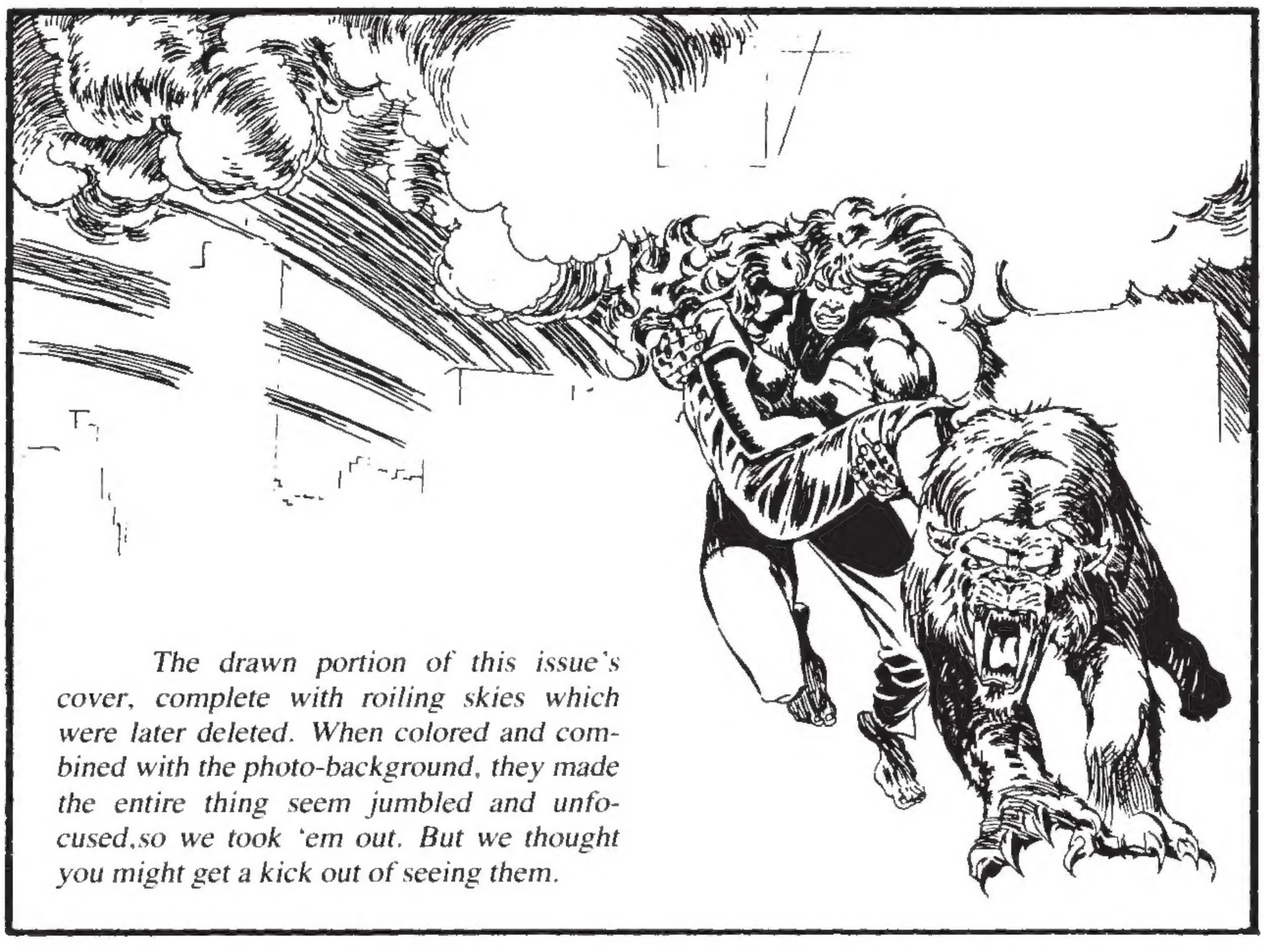
AND SPEAKING OF NEXT ISSUE... I must here inform you that it will be *sixty* days before it is on sale, instead of the accustomed thirty. Yes, as many of you probably already know, KA-ZAR is going bi-monthly as are MOON KNIGHT and MICRONAUTS. This is *not* a move made necessary by flagging sales, but rather by a desire to make our direct sales titles the *best* they can possibly be. We want to be able to do special covers, fumettis, and all sorts of exciting new things. We want to be able to give guys like Bruce and Armando all the time they need to stretch their creative muscles and cut loose. And in a 32-page no- (or nearly no-) ads format, we found we were having trouble getting all that done in the time alloted. So we're cutting back to bi-monthly status — which is just as well. After all, next issue will feature a thirty-two page Ka-Zar story, and issue #29 — which will be on sale both direct *and* newsstand — will be forty-eight pages with no ads! We're gonna need *time* to do those babies right.

But here's a promise: if and when we can find a way to bring KA-ZAR back to monthly status without a concomitant loss of quality — then you can rest assured we will.

Anyway, until next time, take care.

Danny

Danny Fingeroth



The drawn portion of this issue's cover, complete with roiling skies which were later deleted. When colored and combined with the photo-background, they made the entire thing seem jumbled and unfocused, so we took 'em out. But we thought you might get a kick out of seeing them.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: KA-ZAR™ THE SAVAGE

BRUCE JONES SCRIPT • RON FRENZ BREAKDOWNS • ARMANDO GIL FINISHES • GEORGE ROUSSOS COLORS • JANICE CHIANG LETTERS • DANNY FINGEROTH EDITOR • JIM SHOOTER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK!

HE KNOWS HE'S DYING AND HE KNOWS HE CAN'T GIVE UP. HE'S COME TOO FAR, ENDURED TOO MUCH, STRUGGLED TOO HARD. KA-ZAR THE SAVAGE WILL NOT BE DENIED.

HE'S BEEN USED AND ABUSED, CRUELLY MANIPULATED, SNATCHED FROM THE BRINK OF DEATH -- ONLY TO FIND OUT THAT HE'S DYING AGAIN!

THE ONE THING THAT'S KEPT HIM GOING IS THE THOUGHT OF HIS BELOVED SHANNA -- AND NOW THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN WANTS TO KEEP HIM FROM HER.

TELL ME WHERE SHE IS OR I'LL--

--NOOOOOO!

MISSED ME! NOW CALM DOWN SO WE CAN TALK!

CRASH!

AND SO, THE BATTLE IN NEW YORK'S RIVERSIDE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL CONTINUES, WITH SPIDER-MAN REPEATEDLY ELUDING THE LUNGES OF THE MAN HE HAS NO WISH TO HARM...

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...HOPING KEVIN PLUNDER'S RAGE WILL ABATE.

WHAMM!

THAT KNOCKED THE WIND OUT OF ME. GOT TO -- UHHHH...

IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN... ANOTHER WAVE OF DIZZINESS... WEAKNESS. RAMONA DIDN'T LIE ABOUT THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF THE CURE WHICH REMOVED THAT BULLET FROM MY BRAIN AND SAVED MY LIFE.*

*ISSUES #23-25-- DANNY.

I'M GONNA DIE FOR REAL. SOON!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

SPIDER-MAN, MAYBE YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I'VE *BEEN* THROUGH...

MAYBE YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I'VE GONE THROUGH TO GET BACK TO THE WOMAN I LOVE...

"... MAYBE YOU DON'T REALIZE THAT I WAS HAULED OFF TO AFRICA...

"... MADE A PAWN BY A.I.M. AND RAMONA COURTLAND...

"... FELL-- ALONG WITH ZABU -- FROM RAMONA'S PLANE AS SHE AND HER PAL, PREVIN, ACCIDENTALLY BLEW THEMSELVES TO BITS!

"MAYBE YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS LIKE FOR US TO BE STRANDED IN THE MIDDLE OF AN OCEAN WITH HUNGRY SHARKS ALL AROUND...

"...OR THE *RELIEF* OF SUDDEN, UNHOPED-FOR RESCUE BY AN OFF-COURSE FISHING BOAT...!

"I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO FEEL BLESSED OR CURSED BY WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME..."

BUT I DO KNOW THAT I'M ALIVE NOW, AND BEFORE I FINALLY DO DIE-- I'M GOING TO SEE SHANNA.

AND NO ONE-- NOT EVEN YOU, SPIDER-MAN-- IS GOING TO KEEP ME FROM HER!

KA-ZAR, I... I HAD NO IDEA. YOU'VE BEEN SO UPSET AND OBSESSED, YOU WOULDN'T TELL ME WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO YOU.

BUT I *STILL* CAN'T LET YOU SEE HER.

I DON'T NEED YOUR SYMPATHY, WALL CRAWLER. I NEED TO SEE SHANNA! WHAT ARE YOU HIDING FROM ME?

ARE YOU GOING TO TELL ME WHERE YOU'RE HIDING HER, OR DO I HAVE TO *ROUGH YOU UP*?

"ROUGH ME UP"...?

FACE IT, KA-ZAR! YOU'RE THE STRONGEST HUMAN I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED, BUT YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR SOMEONE WHO'S *SUPERHUMAN!*

YEAH? *SAYS WHO?*

WHUMP!

...OOOO... THAT SMARTS...

THIS IS POINTLESS, KA-ZAR. I KNOW YOU'RE ANGRY, I KNOW YOU'RE FRUSTRATED... BUT I'D RATHER YOU GOT IT OUT OF YOUR SYSTEM... AND LANDED ONE GOOD PUNCH ON ME, SO WE CAN TALK THIS OUT LIKE *PEOPLE*.

SPIDER-MAN LOOKS COMPASSIONATELY INTO KA-ZAR'S EYES. KA-ZAR STARES AT HIM SILENTLY...

THEN...

SMASH!

CRRUNCH!!

GOOD PUNCH...

FEEL BETTER NOW?

AS A MATTER OF FACT, I DO!

GOOD.

LISTEN, IT'S NOT THAT I WANT TO KEEP SHANNA FROM YOU--BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HER!

SO *EXPLAIN* IT TO ME ALREADY!

WHEN YOU 'DIED', SHANNA'S WORLD FELL APART...

"SHE INSISTED YOU WERE STILL ALIVE, SHE COULDN'T ACCEPT YOUR DEATH! FINALLY HER THIN VENEER OF SANITY FELL AWAY. SHE BECAME HYSTERICAL --

"-- AND THEN CATATONIC. THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE TO DO BUT COMMIT HER..."

COMMIT HER? YOU MEAN SHE'S IN A *MENTAL INSTITUTION*?!

I MEAN SHE'S RIGHT HERE IN THIS HOSPITAL ON THE PSYCHIATRIC WARD, BEING CARED FOR BY AN EXCELLENT STAFF...

BUT SEEING YOU ALIVE COULD BE THE WORST THING IN THE WORLD FOR HER RIGHT NOW...

BUT, DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND... A.I.M. HAS AGENTS PLANTED HERE! SHE COULD BE IN THEIR HANDS. SHE MIGHT EVEN BE...

IF THEY DO HAVE HER, THEN WE'LL FACE THEM TOGETHER... AND GET SHANNA OUT OF HERE.

BUT YOU'VE GOT TO TRUST ME... AND WORK WITH ME. TOGETHER.

I DON'T CARE IF I DIE... I DON'T CARE IF A.I.M. TAKES OVER THE WHOLE STINKING WORLD, I JUST WANT TO SEE... TO TOUCH HER... JUST ONCE, BEFORE...

TOGETHER, OKAY?

TOGETHER...

FRIEND.

SOON, IN A NEARBY CORRIDOR...

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW RIDICULOUS YOU LOOK UP THERE?

YOU'RE JUST JEALOUS BECAUSE YOU CAN'T DO IT!

SHH! I SENSE SOMEONE COMING!

HEART ATTACK PATIENT! CLEAR THE WAY, WE'RE COMING THROUGH!

CODE BLUE! CORONARY EMERGENCY! CODE BLUE!

THIS IS NO GOOD! WE'LL HAVE TO GO ANOTHER ROUTE!

WHICH OTHER ROUTE?

WHICH OTHER ROUTE IS THERE?...

... STRAIGHT UP!

PUFF! WOULD YOU MIND SLOWING DOWN A BIT? PANT! SCALING BUILDINGS ISN'T MY SPECIALTY!

YEAH, I CAN TELL!

THE CORRIDOR WINDOW'S DEAD AHEAD.

PHEW! YOU DID SOME NUMBER ON THOSE BARS!

I ALSO PLAY A MEAN KAZOO...

SHANNA'S ROOM IS DOWN THIS HALLWAY...

KEEP QUIET NOW, WE DON'T WANT ANYONE TO HEAR US!

SHE'S IN THERE! I'LL KEEP WATCH WHILE--

HEY! WHAT *IS* THIS? ANOTHER *TRICK?*

W-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THERE'S NO ONE *IN THERE!* THE ROOM'S *EMPTY!*

MAYBE THEY *MOVED* HER AGAIN...

MOVED HER? TO *WHERE?!?*

KA-ZAR, YOU'RE ATTRACTING ATTENTION...

AND FROM OUT OF THE NEIGH-BORING PSYCHIATRIC WARDS...

THE ONE IN THE LOIN-CLOTH IS MY EX-HUBBY HARRY! HE ALWAYS *DID* HAVE A TEMPER!

SUDDENLY FROM DOWN THE HALL...

AAAIIEEEEEE!

THAT'S *SHANNA!*

AAAAAA!!!!!!EEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

LET'S MOVE!

DON'T GET YOURSELF IN AN UPROAR, HARRY! IT'S JUST THAT SILLY RED-HAIRED GIRL HAVING HER SHOCK TREATMENT! SHE *ALWAYS* SCREAMS LIKE THAT!

ME? I *NEVER* SCREAM...

WHILE IN THE SHOCK TREATMENT ROOM...

AAAIIIIEEEEEEE!!!!

THAT'S IT, STRAP HER DOWN TIGHT!

WE DON'T WANT HER GETTING LOOSE AGAIN!

GEE, DR. MASON, SHE DON'T LOOK SO GOOD! MAYBE WE OUGHTA LEAVE HER ALONE FOR AWHILE!

NONSENSE...

RAMONA STARR SAID I COULD USE THIS PATIENT FOR MY EXPERIMENTS--TO MAKE HER TEMPORARY, TRAUMA-AND-DRUG-INDUCED PSYCHOSIS *PERMANENT!* I INTEND TO DO *JUST THAT!*

BUT, MANY MORE TREATMENTS LIKE THIS COULD *KILL* HER!

SHE'S *ALREADY* WASTING AWAY!

THEN WE'D BETTER HURRY, HADN'T WE?..

NO! LET ME GO!! LET ME--

NOW!

SHANNA'S LITHE FORM CONTORTS HIDEOUSLY AS THOUSANDS OF VOLTS COURSE THROUGH HER BRAIN!

AAAAGHHHH!

WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU TRYING TO PULL HERE?

YOU THERE! GET *AWAY* FROM HER!

MUST BE SOME NEW PATIENT!

BABY?

S-SHANNA? IS THAT YOU?

YOU-- *MONSTERS!!*

I'LL KILL YOU!

AAGHH! HELP! GET HIM *OFF* ME!

OKAY, BIG BOY, LET'S LEAVE THE DOC ALON--

MY LORD!

--ULP!

THUD!

DETERMINATION IN HIS EYES, DOCTOR MASON TEARS THE RE-STRAINING STRAP FROM SHANNA'S WRIST--

--MEANING TO PUT IT TO BETTER USE!

SAY "AH", SAVAGE!

AAAAAGHHHH!

KA-ZAR TAKES A LURCHING STEP BACKWARD, THROWING THE DOCTOR AGAINST THE ELECTRICITY-CHARGED CONSOLE--

ZZT!

ZZZZ

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA...

--WHERE A LOOSE WIRE DOES THE REST--

--CHARRING HIS BODY TO A BLACKENED CINDER!

AROOOOOOOOO

THERE'S THE ALARM! THEY'LL BE AFTER US NOW!

HERE COMES THE ORDERLY! QUICK, DOWN THIS WAY!

HEY! WHATCHA THINK YOU'RE DOING?

COME BACK HERE WITH THAT GIRL!

SUDDENLY, A HAND GRASPS SPIDEY'S WRIST...

YOU--!

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE FOOLIN'? YOU'RE NOT SPIDER-MAN!

LEGGO, KID!

I'M SPIDER-MAN-- WHOOF!

THE WEB SLINGER DEFLECTS THE BLOW EASILY AND--

-- THE SECOND 'SPIDER-MAN' FALLS FLAT ON THE WAXY HALL FLOOR.

COME BACK HERE!

SEE? I TOLD YOU I WAS SPIDER-MAN...

YOU CAN'T KIDNAP THE PATIENTS. IT'S *NOT* ALLOWED.

WHA--?

I'M GONNA--

WHOOOOOPS!

GEE, THANKS, PAL!

MAYBE YOU DON'T LOOK SO SILLY UP THERE *AFTER* ALL!

THANKS.

BUT, OUTSIDE THE WINDOW, A SPOTLIGHT RIVETS THE ESCAPING TRIO...

UH-OH! TROUBLE!

THEY'VE GOT US SURROUNDED. WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

LEAVE IT TO ME...

NOW JUST GIVE THE LITTLE LADY UP, BOYS, AND THERE'LL BE NO BLOODSHED!

THWIPPP!

HEELLLLPPP! JOSHUA, HE'S GOT ME!

SPIDER-MAN ATTACHES THE STICKY WEBBING TO THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING ...

...AND MOMENTS LATER...

THIS AIN'T GONNA LOOK TOO GOOD ON THE OFFICIAL REPORT, BERLE!

SHUT UP, JOSH!

THEY HAD TO KEEP THE FLOODLIGHTS FOCUSED ON THAT RESCUE--NOT US. HOPE I DIDN'T SCARE THAT COP TOO MUCH.

LET'S LAY LOW ON THAT ROOFTOP TILL THINGS COOL DOWN.

AN HOUR LATER, THINGS HAVE YET TO "COOL DOWN" AS THEY STILL CROUCH ON THE SAME ROOFTOP. BELOW THEM, THE STREETS ARE LIT WITH CHERRY-TOPS AND SPOTLIGHTS.

I'VE GOT TO GET SHANNA BACK TO THE SAVAGE LAND... IT'S HER ONLY HOPE TO GET SANE AGAIN. I *KNOW* IT IS. I CAN *FEEL* IT!

BUT YOU... YOU'RE DYING *AGAIN!* WHY DON'T YOU GET YOURSELF AND SHANNA SOME *REAL* MEDICAL ATTENTION! NEW YORK HAS THE FINEST DOCTORS IN THE CIVILIZED WORLD!

IN THE "CIVILIZED WORLD." ONCE, YOUR CIVILIZATION SEEMED SO SEDUCTIVE TO ME. MAYBE I WOULD HAVE LISTENED TO YOU THEN. BUT NOT TODAY...

"CIVILIZATION" BROUGHT ME COURTLAND, A.I.M., RAMONA... AND *TRAGEDY*. I'D RATHER DIE IN THE LAND THAT NURTURED ME... THAN PLACE MY FAITH IN YOUR SCIENCE-- AND MAYBE LOSE BOTH MY LIFE *AND* SHANNA'S SANITY.

BUT--

NO BUTS.

;SIGH; OKAY, I UNDERSTAND! BUT HOW DO YOU PLAN ON *GETTING* TO THE SAVAGE LAND? IF THE AUTHORITIES CATCH YOU, IT COULD BE THE END!

CAN YOU GET ME TO THE FULTON FISH MARKET?

DAWN LIGHTS THE COBBLESTONE STREETS OF THE FULTON FISH MARKET, WHERE TRUCK-LOADS OF CATCH ARE SOLD WHOLESALE IN THE STREETS...

--COULDN'T AFFORD TO PROWL AROUND NEW YORK WITH A VERY *CONSPICUOUS* SABER-TOOTH, ESPECIALLY ONE RECOVERING FROM A BULLET WOUND*, SO FERDIE AND BIFF, THE FISHERMEN WHO RESCUED US, SMUGGLED HIM IN AND HAVE BEEN KEEPING HIM DOWN HERE.

*SUSTAINED IN ISSUE #24-- DANNY.

SEE?

BAD KITTY! LET GO O' MY FISH!

HOWDY, THERE, BUSTER! WHO'S THAT WITH YOU?

A SICK FRIEND, FERDIE. I'M GOING TO NEED YOUR HELP!

SAY, DID YOU KNOW THAT SOME SAP IN RED AND BLUE PAJAMAS IS HANGIN' UPSIDE-DOWN OVER YOUR--

NEVER MIND HIM. CAN YOU GET ME AND MY GIRL AND ZABU ON A PLANE OUT OF HERE WITHOUT BEING SEEN?

WELL, I DUNNO... WAIT A SEC! THE REFRIGERATOR PLANE IS TAKIN' MY CATCH OUT TO NANTUCKET THIS AFTERNOON! WILL THAT DO?

THAT'LL DO JUST DANDY! THANKS!

KA-ZAR?..

LISTEN. I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I'M GRATEFUL FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE--

--BUT THERE'S NOTHING MORE YOU CAN *DO*! I'M TAKING SHANNA HOME, AND *THAT'S THAT!*

NOW WHY DON'T YOU JUST SAY 'GOOD LUCK, KA-ZAR' AND I'LL BE ON MY WAY...

YOU'RE NOT GIVING ME MUCH CHOICE...

...BUT I HATE TO SEE YOU GO. GOOD LUCK, KA-ZAR...

...GOODBYE, SHANNA...

READY TO GO, BUSTER?

YEAH...

...JUST SAYING 'GOODBYE' TO A FRIEND...

WITHIN MINUTES, FERDIE IS BEHIND THE WHEEL OF HIS OLD JALOPY, RACING ACROSS MANHATTAN WITH A LOAD OF FRESH HERRING--

--AND SOME FISHY PASSENGERS!

YOU FOLKS BREATHIN' ALL RIGHT BACK THERE?

WE'RE GREAT, FERDIE, IF YOUR IDEA OF GREAT IS SMELLY AND SLIMEY!

HOW FAR TO THE AIRPORT?

'BOUT FIVE MORE MINUTES! KEEP YER SHIRT ON! ;HEH-HEH;

KNOCK IT OFF, ZABU! YOU'RE EATING ALL OUR CAMOFLAGUE!

SHANNA'S FACE IS A COLD, SILENT MASK...

DON'T WORRY, BABY, I'LL GET US OUT OF THIS! I PROMISE!

BUT AS FERDIE PULLS UP TO THE AIRPORT GATE--

Mc CONLAN AIRFIELD

HOWDY, OFFICER! JES' DELIVERIN' MY WEEKLY CATCH! ;HEH-HEH;

OKAY, LET HIM THROUGH!

--SOMETHING ROUSES SHANNA AND SHE OPENS HER EYES!

S-SHANNA? DON'T BE AFRAID. IT'S ME, BABY! KA-ZAR!

YOU--LIAR! YOU'RE NOT KA-ZAR! KA-ZAR IS DEAD!

KA-ZAR IS--MMPH!

HUSH, BABY, THEY'LL HEAR YOU!

LET ME GO! YOU'RE DEAD! DEAD!

WHAT TH--?!

SORRY, OFFICERS, GOTTA GO!

FERDIE SPEEDS PAST THE GUARDS WHILE IN THE BACK OF THE TRUCK, SHANNA BATTERS KA-ZAR WITH A FLOUNDER!

HEY, COME BACK!

DEAD! DEAD! DEAD!

SHANNA, LISTEN, PLEASE--

I REALLY HATE TO DO THIS, BUT--

OE-- AGHH!

WHAP!

SECONDS LATER, FERDIE DROPS HIS PASSENGERS NEAR A PRIVATE PLANE ON THE AIRSTRIP...

'TAINT THE 'FRIGERATOR PLANE, BUT IT'S THE BEST I KIN DO!

THANKS, FERDIE.

OUTTA MY WAY, YA DANGED LANDLUBBERS! WHOOPIE!

THIS WAY, ZABU!

SO, BILLY, DO YOU THINK YOU'RE READY TO TAKE 'ER UP SOLO?

YES, DAD. WE'VE BEEN OVER THIS A HUNDRED--

'SCUSE ME, MISTER, YOU'VE JUST ACQUIRED SOME NEW PASSENGERS.

YOU KIDS-- LEAVE. NOW.

OH, WOW!

GET OFF MY PLANE. WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, BARGING IN LIKE THIS?!

ZABU...

DUMP HIM.

THERE IS A SOUND OF COMMAND IN HIS MASTER'S VOICE THAT THE CAT RECOGNIZES--

--AND ACTS UPON!

HEY!

WOW, BILLY, NONE OF THE OTHER FLYING LESSONS YOUR DAD WAS GIVING YOU HAVE BEEN THIS EXCITING!

YEAH!

WELL, KID, CAN YOU GET THIS CRATE OFF THE GROUND?

S-SURE.

THEN DO IT!

WHOOOOOMM!

OF HIS OWN FATE, HE IS LESS CERTAIN...

IF ONLY I'D *LISTENED* TO YOU ABOUT RAMONA! YOU WERE RIGHT, YOU WERE *SO* RIGHT!

HE KNOWS SHANNA'S WELFARE DEPENDS ON RETURNING HER TO FAMILIAR SIGHTS, FAMILIAR SOUNDS, TO THE HOME SHE KNOWS AND LOVES...

SEVERAL DAYS AND SEVERAL REFUELINGS LATER THEY ARE FLYING OVER THE SAVAGE LAND, AND BILLY MARKAM HAS LOGGED ENOUGH HOURS TO PILOT PROFESSIONALLY FOR TWA. SHANNA IS SLIPPING DEEPER INTO A CATATONIC STATE AS KA-ZAR GROWS WEAKER AND WEAKER...

YOU--*CAN* FLY, CAN'T YOU?

SURE; I'VE BEEN TAKING LESSONS FOR MONTHS; I WAS GONNA SOLO TODAY!

HEY! YOU *ARE* SOLOING! KICKIN'!

BILLY EXECUTES AN ACCIDENTAL LOOP AS HE SAILS OUT OF THE AIRPORT AND OVER THE OCEAN...

WOW, BILLY, THAT WAS REALLY EXCELLENT, I'M *SERIOUS*, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD DO THAT, LIKE, IT WAS AWESOME!

TH-THANKS, LINDA!

"REMEMBER THAT MACHINE THAT RE-CAPTURED YOUR SOUL, KA-ZAR? WELL, ITS EFFECTS ARE ONLY TEMPORARY! YOU'LL BE DEAD BEFORE THE WEEK IS OUT!"

CURSE YOU, RAMONA...

HEY, MR. KA-ZAR? YOU OKAY? YOU GOTTA JUMP NOW! BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT BEING HIJACKED BY YOU HAS BEEN, WELL, BEEN--

--AWESOME?

YEAH, THAT'S THE WORD EXACTLY!

HEY, LIKE, IT'S TOO BAD YOUR OLD LADY'S SO STRUNG OUT I MEAN--

GOTTA GO NOW. YOU AND BILLY FOLLOW THOSE INSTRUCTIONS AND YOU'LL BE HOME IN NO TIME!

HOME? WHO WANTS TO GO HOME?

SECONDS LATER KA-ZAR, HOLDING SHANNA IN HIS ARMS, NUDGES A RELUCTANT ZABU THROUGH THE DOOR.

AS THE PLANE TURNS TO LEAVE THE SAVAGE LAND, THEIR PARA-CHUTES OPEN, AND THEY GLIDE SLOWLY DOWN.

AND SOON...

WE MADE IT, BABY! WE'RE HOME! HOME!

I KNOW YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ME RIGHT NOW, SHANNA, BUT I PROMISE I'LL MAKE YOU BETTER! I--

UNNNHHH...

SUDDENLY THE WORLD SEEMS TO WHIRL AROUND HIM, AND SHANNA'S IMMOBILE FACE BLURS BEYOND RECOGNITION!

NO! NOT YET! I CAN'T DIE YET! SHE WON'T SURVIVE WITHOUT ME!

SHANNA...

SHAN-UHHH!

AND AS KA-ZAR'S WORLD GOES BLACK--

--SHANNA STARES BLANKLY AHEAD, UNSEEING...

MANY HOURS LATER A HUGE SHADOW DESCENDS OVER SHANNA'S STILL-STARING FACE--

SHANNA?

LORD KA-ZAR?

BEHIND THE JUST LANDED FIGURE RACES AN EXHAUSTED ZABU--

--ZABU, WHO RAN TO SUMMON HIM FROM AERIE SHALAN WHEN HE COULD NOT ROUSE KA-ZAR...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO SHANNA... AND TO LORD KA-ZAR?

AND SUDDENLY, AFTER DAYS OF COMPLETE STONY SILENCE, SHANNA SPEAKS!

NO... THAT'S NOT KA-ZAR! KA-ZAR IS DEAD! I REMEMBER...

...KA-ZAR IS DEAD!

AND THE MAN CALLED BUTH LOOKS ON IN HORROR AND DISBELIEF!

NEXT PANGEA!...

...AND EVEN STRANGER LANDS!

IN THE DAYS WHEN KA-ZAR WAS A BOY...

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

TALES of ZABU!

KA-ZAR. IN THE LANGUAGE OF MAA-GOR'S MAN-APES, IT MEANS SON OF THE TIGER. KA-ZAR. THE TOUSLE-HAIRED YOUTH CALLED KEVIN PLUNDER HAD MANY MOONS AGO BEEN GIVEN THAT NAME BY MAA-GOR'S TRIBESMEN, FOR HE HAD BEEN SAVED FROM THEIR BLOOD-LUST AND ADOPTED BY THE MIGHTY SABER-TOOTH, ZABU.

BUT ALL THAT HAS CHANGED. DUE TO AN ACCIDENT, KEVIN PLUNDER HAS FORGOTTEN HIS BOND WITH THE HELPLESS TIGER BEFORE HIM. KEVIN KNOWS ONLY THAT MAA-GOR IS HIS ADOPTED FATHER NOW. MAA-GOR, WHO EARLIER HAD FORCED THE YOUTH INTO MAKING HIS FIRST HUMAN KILL... MAA-GOR WHO HAS TURNED HIM FOREVER FROM KEVIN PLUNDER INTO KA-ZAR... THE SAVAGE.

THE FINAL BLOW

AND NOW ZABU, THE LAST OF THE BREED MAA-GOR SO DESPISES, LIES IMPOTENTLY ON THE DARK HUMUS, HOPELESSLY ENSNARED IN MAA-GOR'S WOOD TRAP, AND AWAITS A DEATH ORDERED BY MAA-GOR, A DEATH AT THE HAND OF HIS FORMER MASTER AND FRIEND!

BRUCE JONES - WRITER
VAL MAYERIK - ARTIST
JANICE CHIANG - LETTERER

GEORGE ROUSSOS - COLORIST
DANNY FINGEROTH - EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER - EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THE BOY'S EYES ARE CLEAR NOW...STEADY...

...HIS AIM IS SURE... TRUE...

... THERE WILL BE NO MISJUDGEMENT... NO MISTAKES...

...ONLY SWIFT, DEADLY ACCURACY!

MAA-GOR LOOKS ON WITH PATERNAL PRIDE. WHAT A FINE DAY THIS IS! WHAT A SUPERB LAD...

... AS SAVAGE AND RUTHLESS AS HIS PROUD NEW FATHER!

IN FACT..., EVEN MAA-GOR IS A BIT STARTLED AT THE FEROCITY OF THOSE MERCILESS THRUSTS. GREAT GODS OF DARKNESS, HE'LL MAKE MINCEMEAT OF THE CAT!

NO POINT IN RUINING GOOD MEAT! THEY COULD HAVE A CELEBRATION TONIGHT... CARVE UP THE GREAT CAT...

THEY COULD PASS THE CARCASS AROUND, SHOW OFF THE LAD'S GREAT SKILL! NO POINT IN **BUTCHERING** SUCH A MAGNIFICENT CAT HIDE! THEY COULD HANG IT ABOVE MAA-GOR'S CAVE!..

THEY COULD--!!

AGH!

GROWFF!

THUNK!

YOWLLLL!

Y-I-I-I-I-I-I-I

THEY CANNOT GO FAR... THE GREAT CAT IS STILL WEAK FROM HIS BRUSH WITH DEATH*...

...BUT THEN, MIGHTY MAA-GOR IS HARDLY IN A POSITION TO PURSUE THEM, EITHER...

*ISSUES #24 & 25--DANNY.

THEY DO, HOWEVER, GET FAR ENOUGH TO REACH THE LEGENDARY HEALING PLANTS OF THE SAVAGE LAND...

...AND, AS ZABU HIMSELF HAD TAUGHT HIM IN RECENT MONTHS, YOUNG KEVIN PLUNDER APPLIES THEIR JUICES IN COPIOUS AMOUNTS TO HIS FRIEND'S WOUNDS...

SOON THE GREAT CAT IS SLEEPING PEACEFULLY, CONTENTED AS ONLY THOSE WHO SLEEP BESIDE A LOVED ONE CAN BE...

...AND YOUNG KEVIN IS LEFT WITH HIS OWN THOUGHTS...

IT IS WELL THAT THE SIGHT OF HIS TRAPPED COMPANION BROUGHT THE BOY'S SENSES BACK SO SWIFTLY. ANOTHER MOMENT AND IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN TOO LATE...

EVEN SO, THE YOUNG KA-ZAR KNOWS THAT SOMETHING HAS BEEN LOST FOREVER THIS DAY...

FOR HE HAS KILLED A FELLOW HUMAN, AND MIND CLOUDED OR NOT, HIS INNOCENCE HAS NONETHELESS FLED HIM...

HE IS NO LONGER THE CAREFREE JUNGLE YOUTH WITH THE SABER-TOOTH FELINE PROTECTOR. HE IS SOMEONE JUST LEARNING THE ENORMITY OF LIFE'S RESPONSIBILITIES...

...HE IS KA-ZAR THE SAVAGE... HE IS A MAN.

end.

ONE OR TWO PARTICULARLY INCREDULOUS READERS HAVE EXPRESSED SOME DISBELIEF THAT ANY DEVICE CREATED BY A.I.M. AND (**BOO! HISS!**) RAMONA COULD BRING THE MORTALLY-WOUNDED KA-ZAR BACK TO LIFE. TO THESE FEW, WE OFFER THIS ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATION. LAST WEEK, AT THE MARVEL OFFICES...

WHEN I, CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER OF THE BEST-SELLING NEW MUTANTS :SOB: AND THE AWARD-WINNING X-MEN, FIRST READ OF KA-ZAR'S DEATH, :SOB: I WAS, OF COURSE, BROKEN HEARTED.
KA-ZAR HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF MY PERSONAL FAVORITES.
BUT THEN I SAW THE BRIGHT SIDE.
I REALIZED THAT, WITH KA-ZAR DEAD, THE BOOK WILL BE CALLED SHANNA THE SAVAGE, AND IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT I--THE AWARD-WINNING AND BEST-SELLING FOREMOST AUTHOR OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THE BUSINESS--
--WILL BE ASKED TO WRITE IT. (NOTHING PERSONAL, BRUCE.)
HMMMM! I'VE GOT THE FIRST ISSUE PLOTTED ALREADY
SHANNA WILL BE LONELY. WITHOUT KA-ZAR, SO I'LL BRING BACK LEANNE (WHO WILL HAVE BEEN PURGED OF ALL EVIL) AND SHE AND SHANNA WILL DEVELOP A DEEP AND LASTING... SPECIAL FRIENDSHIP.
BUT SHANNA, AFFECTED BY THE MANIPULATIONS OF A.I.M. TECHNOLOGY, WILL DEVELOP... POWERS. TELEPATHIC. TELEKINETIC, EVEN!
SHE'LL USE THEM TO RE-SHAPE HER COSTUME... TO MAKE IT SLEEKER, SEXIER, SKIMPIER! THIS ISN'T A CODE BOOK, AFTER ALL!
THEN SHE'LL BECOME THE STRONGEST MUTANT FEMALE MIND IN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE AND THEN--WOW, I'M A GENIUS!--
--DARK SHANNA!!!
OVER MY DEAD BODY!
:GAK!: :GAK!:
DOINNGGG!

Script: **LOUISE JONES** Photography: **DANNY FINGEROTH** Art: **ARMANDO GIL**